Speech Acts and Music Acts

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Speech Acts and Music Acts – intentionality in language and music

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Abstract In this paper, I consider J. L. Austin's William James Lectures 'How to do Things with Words', in order to ask to what extent Austin's notion of the speech act might also be applicable to music. Are there 'music-acts', and what would such a possibility tell us about music and its evolution, its relationship to language, and its social functions?

Keywords: Speech Act, Austin, Jankélévitch, Darwin, Intention, Music

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0. Introduction

In the abstract for the first of his William James Lectures at Harvard University in 1955, J. L. Austin sets out what is surely a provocative premise when he begins: «Many "statements" were shown to be, as Kant perhaps first argued systematically, strictly nonsense, despite an unexceptionable grammatical form». This observation, oddly and of course unintentionally, seems to me to place language and music in the same bracket. It is important to my discussion to consider this parallel, since it is not perhaps so obvious that music and language are «in the same bracket». Indeed, Peter Kivy (2007) notes that when he was invited to speak at a colloquium entitled Music, Language and Cognition, his first response was to be «reminded of the game in which a child is shown, for example, pictures of an apple, a banana, and a trumpet, and asked "Which one doesn't belong?"». For Kivy, the odd one out is Language, whose relation to music he regards as merely confusing. This is because Kivy is participant in a long-standing debate about how and what music means. One of the key figures in this debate is the Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick, who in his book *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen: Ein Beitrag zur Revision der Ästhetik der Tonkunst* [On the Musically Beautiful: A Contribution Towards the Revision of the Aesthetics of Music] (1854) already separates out music and language as follows:

> while sound in speech is but a sign, that is, a means for the purpose of expressing something which is quite distinct from its medium, sound in music is the end, that is the ultimate and absolute object in view (Hanslick 1854: 67).

Austin's argument, however, provides what seems to me an interesting point of contact between the two. Austin is trying to show that language does something more than what

we might think it does; which is «to state some fact»: to provide us with a complete, coherent and pinned-down meaning within the logical structures of words and syntax. When Steven Pinker (1997) – to take only the most extreme and notorious example – describes music as «auditory cheesecake», he is perhaps making a similar observation that, despite its obvious, delineated materials and structuring processes - arguably in their own way as 'grammatical' as Austin's statements - music also is «strictly nonsense»; that is, it also has no complete and coherent meaning that we can identify logically, especially in words.
Pinker writes:

> Compared with language, vision, social reasoning, and physical know-how, music could vanish from our species and the rest of our lifestyle would be virtually unchanged. Music appears to be a pure pleasure technology (Pinker 1997: 528)[1].

This is a different challenge to that posed by Hanslick, concerned not with what it is about music that has meaning for us, but rather with the way in which music's meaning impacts on what it is to be a living being. However, these two challenges also seem to me to be related by Austin's observation. Austin's point is that language, to be as central as it is to human culture, must be doing something else besides stating. Similarly, some of our difficulties in thinking about music may stem from the fact that it also is doing something other than what we think it is doing. Perhaps, in both cases, the something more is *effecting an action*?

1. Social Configurations

What I want to consider here is to what extent Austin's notion of the speech act might also be applicable to music. Are there 'music-acts', and what would such a possibility tell us about music, its evolution, its relationship to language, and its social functions? The resistance music has to explicit meaning - its quality of 'ineffability' - is one of the properties that makes its possible relationship to language puzzling. Austin's argument, of course, is that language is not an end in itself, but rather a medium through which many kinds of actions are performed. This fits, for example, with Michael Arbib's view, in the Introduction to his recent book *Language, Music and the Brain* (Arbib 2013), that neither language nor music are simply patterns of sound, but must be considered in terms of the action-perception strategies of a living organism. Now, Austin's 'actions' and Arbib's 'action and perception', while related, are not quite the same thing. The action-perception strategies of an organism are individual to that organism and psycho-biologically internalised, while Austin is looking outwards from the organism to notice the effects words have in the socially determined contexts within which they are uttered. At the same time, each of these action-perception modes co-evolves with a context or environment that provides what are often referred to as 'affordances': relational properties that exist as «the information for perception, with two kinds always available, one about the environment and another about the self» (Gibson 2015: 228).
In *Doing things with music* (Krueger 2010), Joel Krueger considers the notion of 'musical affordance', a relational property that is « exploited to construct and regulate emotions » (Krueger 2010: 1). In this account, developed from both psychological and sociological perspectives (see Trevarthen 1999; DeNora 2000, 2013), music appears to have direct

[1] Pinker is, of course, making a category error here in his comparions, by placing vision and reasoning against 'music' rather than against the auditory sense itself, but he goes on to remark that « music communicates nothing but formless emotion » (*Ivi*: 529), which is a more cogent expression of his view that music lacks « sense ».

physiological and social effects on human listeners. Culturally specific in action, effects such as entrainment and mood regulation are regarded as being intrinsic to music, regardless of how 'music' comes to be identified. In this respect, music could be said to be *effecting an action*, following Hanslick (and Gurney), simply by the brute power of its sounding properties. DeNora's earlier position (1986) presents music as a «place and space for "work"», where work refers to the construction of meaning within a « place and space » determined by social forces. DeNora uses Austin's theory to support the consideration of music « in use » (*Ivi*: 88), and her commitment to social construction focuses on the contestation of the meaning of an utterance:

> culture represents a struggle over the definition of social reality and therefore, the issue of the meaning of objects is also an issue of who defines or appropriates them, where, when, how, and for what purpose (*Ivi*: 93).

In DeNora's account, the work is done not so much by the music as by the listener:

> Thus a sociology of musical meaning is also a sociology of the styles or modes of work done by the listener and as such it should ask questions about how much work the music requires of the listener (*Ivi*: 92).

This, listener-centred discussion is a welcome counter to music-centred hermeneutics, but it does not yet approach a consideration of how music acts might operate. As Andrew Chung points out, in his detailed application of speech act theory to music:

> musical utterances perform actions beyond the level of intramusical mapping and extramusical reference, on the one hand, and its affective, psychological, motoric behavioural. emotional, ideational consequences on the other hand (Chung 2019: 2.3.4).

1.1 Austin's Conditions for Actions

Since we have raised the topic of the social, I want briefly to consider the social configuration of the actors involved in Austin's speech acts, and how these might relate to music. In Austin's first examples, it is clear that various individuals and social groupings are being addressed directly. In the ceremony of marriage, for instance, the statement «I do (take this man to be my lawful wedded husband)» is addressed, multiply, to the celebrant of the marriage, to the husband, to any social onlookers, and importantly to the body of legal statutes that enshrines the requirements and entailments of marriage itself. As Austin says, «it seems clear that to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstances) is not to describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am doing it: it is to do it» (Austin 1955: I, 4). This action, of course, only works in «the appropriate circumstances», which include the various people being addressed knowing that they are being addressed. The act is accomplished through the social changes it effects through agreed conventions. Austin calls the circumstances within which a speech act operates its *felicity conditions*. This emphasises a key aspect of speech acts, that they do not conform to the binary of true/false, but rather are evaluated in terms of whether they turn out well or badly. This connects sensibly with music, where 'truth' is not an issue, but whether the thing happens well or effectively clearly is. Austin's felicity conditions include agreed-upon conventions, but also the authority an actor holds within those conventions: only certain people are able to pronounce a marriage, in Austin's example. It is clear that music only

music typically exists within sets of conventions, agreed or contested specifically within particular social and cultural contexts. Similarly, music performances include regimes of specific authority: there are circumstances in which it is acceptable for a listener to join in the performance, and circumstances where it is not (or consider the late recordings of Glenn Gould, where the performer's own vocal interventions in works nominally for the piano are deemed eccentric by many). But this is just to say that Austin's felicity conditions can seem appropriate to music, and more importantly that they set up and make evident critical relationships across the actors involved in all aspects of an utterance.

Austin distinguishes between speech itself, *locution,* speech acts whose outcome is an inevitable consequence of the speech, *illocution*, and those whose outcome is only a potential, *perlocution*. Thus he says, «we may entirely clear up whether someone was arguing or not without touching on the question whether he was convincing anyone or not» (Austin 1955: VIII, 104). In terms of 'music acts', we should consider whether music might be capable of perlocutionary registers - having «consquential effects» (Austin 1955: VIII, 102). Austin sets out the *types* of illocutionary forces that he finds in speech acts, and it is worth considering those in relation to the possible effects of music. Austin's list includes: *verdictives* – giving a verdict; *exercitives* – exercising rights and powers; *commissives* – committing or promising; *behabitives* – instantiating an attitude or feeling; and *expositives* – establishing relational connections. Justin London (1996) asserts a metaphorical relationship between language and music in order to explore a parallel between Austin's speech act theory and the presence of meaningful structures in European tonal music. His terms *tonary*, *intonary* and *pertonary* map Austin's linguistic definitions onto the progressions of common practice tonality, their meanings and effects. Thus an extended cadential progression, through a cadential dominant to a final tonic, functions as a harmonic progression (tonary), a signification of closure by common convention (intonary), and a possible affect of ending (pertonary). London also limits his parallel to Austin's *behabitives*, since «behabitives are speech acts which are strongly marked by intonation as well as other paralinguistic features» (London 1996: 57) and thus already inhabit a sort of para-musical world within speech.

While London's argument is detailed and convincing, particularly with respect to the Haydn string quartet he takes as his example, he is at pains to emphasise the metaphorical nature of the music/language correspondence. It is not just that, as he admits, he is «at a loss to say what Haydn means» (London 1996: 61), but that the mode of listening implied depends on a particular view of the relationship between utterer and listener that is quite specific to language. Whatever action I may intend by an utterance, it does not happen while I am talking to myself; language always seems to imply that someone is being addressed, as Austin says «in [...] the appropriate circumstances», in order for an act to occur. The speaker, the addressee, and the situation are critically related, but it is worth considering in what ways.

2. The Ineffable

Vladimir Jankélévitch begins his book *Music and the Ineffable* (1961) by considering how music acts on people: in his very first sentence, he asserts «La musique *agit* sur l'homme … / Music *acts* on a person». This action, from the first, operates in a manner that is strikingly different to what I have just described for language. In the first place, in Jankélévitch's account, it is the music, and not the person who makes it, who is performing the action. When Jankélévitch says «*Music* acts …» (my reversal of the emphasis) he is setting up a different social configuration, which he describes as follows:

> One doesn't 'listen to' a pianist who plays *before* an audience or to a singer who sings before that same audience in the same way that one 'listens to' a lecturer speaking *to* his hearers: for the listener is the second person, the 'you' of invocation or allocution, for the lecturer who is looking back at them, whereas the listener is the third person for the pianist sitting at the piano[2] (Jankélévitch 1961: 32, author's translation).

This proposes the listener almost as voyeur, involved in the music but only indirectly. The music is not addressed to them, but appears as a component of a sort of network within which matters of agency and address figure as oblique strategies. You could perhaps reflect that when someone is speaking to you, it is very disconcerting if they avoid your gaze while they are speaking: this is usually interpreted as casting some sort of doubt on the nature of the utterance. On the contrary, it would be equally disconcerting if a pianist fixed you in an interlocutory gaze while performing a piece of music. (I have seen this happen, on television, and it is a curious experience.)
The point here is not to drive a wedge between music and language over matters of agency. In both of these types of utterances, agency gets constructed in diverse and subtle ways, which reveal and instantiate relationships across the networks or assemblages through which the utterances function. Jankélévitch is nevertheless making a striking comment about the mode of address of music. While his example projects a particular image of music-making, as something that takes place within the contemplative aura of a European concert room, in front of an audience whose listening became «quieter, more considerate, and more attentive» (Goehr 1992: 237) as the project of Enlightenment 'civilisation' proceeded, the observation that listening to a pianist is not the same activity as listening to a lecturer is intriguing. If both are engaged in specifically performative activity, where does the difference lie?

2.1 Modes of Address

Jankélévitch is committed to a particular view of performativity that draws on the philosophy of Henri Bergson, and which regards each moment as being the contingent actualisation of specific virtual potentials. As Gilles Deleuze describes it, «in order to be actualized, the virtual cannot proceed by elimination or limitation but must create its own lines of actualization in positive acts» (Deleuze 1966: 97) Thus Jankélévitch exhorts us:

> Music [...] is not made to be talked about, it is made to be done; it is not made to be spoken, but to be "played" [...] Is this not also the definition of the good. The good is made to be done, not just to be said or known [...]. The good is the business of militants![3] (Jankélévitch 1961: 93, author's translation)

This is a sort of radical, creative action that fits with Austin's view of speech acts, and which proposes music not as the re-presentation of the 'already-spoken' (composed) but as the utterance of vital, present acts. What might these music acts be?

[2] On n'« écoute » pas un pianiste qui joue devant son public ou un chanteur qui chante devant ce même public comme on « écoute » un conférencier qui parle à ses auditeurs: car l'auditeur est deuxième personne, personne d'invocation ou d'allocution, pour le conférencier qui le regarde, tandis qu'il est le troisième personne pour le pianiste assis à son piano.
[3] La musique [...] n'est pas faite pour qu'on on parle, elle est faite pour qu'on en fasse; elle n'est pas faite pour être dites, mais pour être « jouée » [...]. N'est-ce pas la définition même du bien? Le bien est fait pour être fait, non pas pour être dit ou connu [...]. Le bien est l'affaire des militantes!

In order to get away from the sort of musical hermeneutics that lies behind London's metaphoric use of speech acts, I will consider two types of music act that spring from two different relationships of addressing. First, a mode of address to a «"you", the object of invocation or allocution» that appears clearly in Jankélévitch's example. The pianist, «seated at the piano», is performing in the manner described by Nicolas Cook as an «irreducibly social phenomenon» (Cook 2012: 186), but to really get at the social one should consider the larger network or assemblage implied in the term «social». When Latour says «I believe it's necessary to scrutinize more thoroughly the exact content of what is 'assembled' under the umbrella of a society» (Latour 2005: 2), he is wishing to include under this umbrella not just humans, but a heterogeneous collection of objects, practices, discourses, and other things that are, for him, inevitably in the social mix. Music performance is not speech; it has its own specific physical activities, energies, and modes of production, and what it produces might be characterised as energies positions these activities and energies in relation to an instrument: there is no music without an instrument (even where that instrument is a voice cf. Schaeffer 1971). The relationship between instrument and performer can be characterised as a social one: there must be communication between the two. The music acts of the performer are first acted in relation to the instrument. As in a speech act, the performative music acts of the pianist must invoke *uptake* on the part of the piano - there are ways in which it the piano will respond, and ways in which it will not. There are conventions that integrate the actions of the performer with the mechanism of the piano in ways that allow *felicity conditions* to operate, allowing the created sound, both in its immediacy and its flow to be, in Austin's terms *happy* or *unhappy*, rather than true or false. From this perspective, playing an instrument is not at all the same as talking to oneself. It is a social production; an exchange between instrument and performer. In Jankélévitch's description, the « conversation », in music as a form of discourse between performer and instrument, is indeed being « overheard » by the audience. This follows indications evident in a number of recent accounts of musical performance (see for example Östersjö 2008) that the notions of control and prosthesis that are often invoked when discussing musical instruments are not necessarily the most productive ones. Even the possibility of the agency of the instrument, raised by the notion of address, fits within a long tradition of writing about music. In Greek mythology concerning Apollo, for example, the satyr, Marsyas «stumbled upon the flute, which he had no sooner put to his lips than it played of itself, inspired by the memory of Athene's music» (Graves 1955: 77). More recently, George Lewis discusses a conversation with Malachi Favors in which Favors remembers «this African brother who had instruments that played themselves» (Lewis 1999: 99).
The second mode of address to consider relates to the recipient of the sound. Both speech and music result in sound - their superficial point of commonality – and if, according to Jankélévitch, the listener in the concert room is an outsider to the utterance, there must also be an insider. Slavoj Žižek and Mladen Dolar touch on this matter in their book, *Opera's Second Death* (2002) when they consider the notion of *mercy* in relation to music's power to act. Dolar writes:

> music acts as an appeal to the Other, as the best means and the best strategy for attaining mercy, softening the Other's heart, bending the Other's resistence. […] Mercy is ambiguous […]: it is nothing but the positive, reverse side of another form of the Other, both more familiar and more terrifying - the Other's whim and caprice (Žižek, Dolar 2002: 10, 23).

This *other* is most often associated with the non-human, thus:

> Orpheus descends to the underworld to gain back his beloved Euridice, and he has only one tool, one instrument to achieve this goal: music. Music is what moves the deity to yield, music can defy death itself (Žižek, Dolar 2002: 8).

This theme of music acts as effectors of transformation, in the utterer but in the presence of an addressee, is explored by Judith Marie Kubicki (1999) in her discussion of music in the sacred liturgy. She invokes the concepts of «existential induction», «institution» and «presentification», from the work of Jean Ladrière (1973) in order to present a view of music as a direct address to another in the form of an act of worship, with discernible consequences.

> What is accomplished in the singing is the *speaking of attitudes* which, because of its illocutionary power can, over time, bring about the transformation of those who participate in the liturgy, even as the participants perform the act of worshiping God (Ladrière 1973: 330).

This act of transformation is echoed in A. L. Lloyd's account of folk song, where he writes:

> Generally the folk song makers chose to express their longing by transposing the world on to an imaginative plane, not trying to escape from it, but colouring it with fantasy, turning bitter, even brutal facts of life into something beautiful, tragic, honourable, so that when singer and listeners return to reality at the end of the song, the environment is not changed but they are better fitted to grapple with it (Lloyd 1975: 170).

Both of these accounts fit with Žižek and Dolar's identification of music as an act of invocation or enchantment (*incantare*), what Jankélévitch refers to as *Charme*, in pursuit of the transformation of mercy. Mercy is neither perlocutionary nor a behabitive; it is achieved through an act, that is in Andrew Chung's formulation «used to apply pressure to the world» (Chung 2018: 2.3.7)
Jankélévitch is interesting in this discussion because he identifies the address mode of music as a symptom of what he sees as its difference from language. This is caught up in his philosophy of radical becoming, as a commitment to the *drastic* rather than the *gnostic* (cf. Abbate 2004), while also attending to the music's details. In considering the notion of music acts, in relation to two modes of address indicated by Jankélévitch, the intention is not to use Austin's insights metaphorically, but to consider whether music might have the same *type* of function as language i.e. doing something. This avoids discussions of meaning, as Austin does, and opens a line of investigation into the possible functions of music as an attribute of an organism. If Pinker's critique is really as wrong-headed as it seems, it must still prompt us to consider what music does as an evolved potential for action rather than - or at least as well as - pleasure. In addition, for Jankélévitch it is the music rather than the performer who is deemed to be doing the acting, and while social conventions clearly bind social actors, could music - whatever that is - be a social actor in the same sense?

3. Origins of Music

While I began by claiming that it is not perhaps so obvious that music and language are « in the same bracket », historical discussions of both language and music have made much of the possible evolutionary relationship between the two. Thus Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (1781), and Herbert Spencer, in his essay

The Origin and Function of Music (1857) attempt to entangle music and language in terms of what and how they express rather than the actions they achieve. Charles Darwin, on the other hand, in *The Descent of Man* (1871), is clear that music has the form of intended action. He writes:

> We shall see that primeval man, or rather some early progenitor of man, probably first used his voice in producing true musical cadences, that is in singing, as do some of the gibbon-apes at the present day; and we may conclude from a widely spread analogy, that this power would have been especially exerted during the courtship of the sexes – would have expressed various emotions, such as love, jealousy, triumph – and would have served as a challenge to rivals (Darwin 1871: 87-88).

and consequently:

> I conclude that musical notes and rhythm were first acquired by the male or female progenitors of mankind for the sake of charming the opposite sex (Darwin 1872: 572).

This would surely count as a sort of music-act and, like Jankélévitch, Darwin locates the power of music in its action rather than in any attribution of expression. He also uses the word «charm» to indicate the type of action involved, and, as we have seen above, to charm is to establish a set of relationships through the negotiation of authorities and consequent actions. It is a social endeavour, but one that critically extends the social beyond the confines of relations amongst a single type of being. It seeks to establish a power, not of authority but of creative potential. I take Darwin's use of the word not as romantic cliché but at face value, as indicative of the creative action implied. As Jankélévitch writes:

> The work of charm [...] is not in saying but in doing (*poiein*), and music, in this way, resembles the poetic act. Make music, was what the dream said to Socrates, and never stop working; *make music and work at it*[4] (Jankélévitch 1961: 91, author's translation).

The work of charm involves both illocution and perlocution. When Austin says 'I bet you …' the words achieve their intended action simply by being uttered, whereas the charming of the opposite sex is not so simply accomplished! (Indeed, Darwin remarks that male birds sometimes die as a result of their singing exertions.) The illocutionary act is not just the establishment of a presence as a source of creative potential, but the offering of transformative relational associations. However, for Darwin, there is *a* music act, but only one. What other music acts could we imagine?

3.1 Technologies

Arnold Pacey begins his book *Meaning in Technology* with a chapter on music, not in the context of its productive technologies but as an active technology itself. Thus he remarks that: « Singing was just an ordinary hunting method. The Inuit used to make up lots of songs to make it easier to hunt animals» (Pacey 1999: 3) In a similar vein, Iain

[4] L'oeuvre du charme [...] n'est pas un dire, mais un faire (ποιεῖν), et la musique, en cela, s'apparente à l'acte poétique. Fais de la musique, ordonne le songe à Socrate, et ne cesse pas d'œuvrer; μουσιχὴν ποίει χαὶ ἐργάζου.

Morley, in *The Prehistory of Music* (2013), starts with a concern for «the roles that musical behaviours might fulfil» (Morley 2013: 11), and he begins with what he considers to be recent evidence of the life-style of the ancient hunter-gathers. As an example, he quotes Kehoe's (1999) account of the culture of the Blackfoot nation in the grasslands of North America, where a young man would sing «a spiritually potent song in the manner of a bleating calf» (Morley 2013: 16) in order to hunt buffalo. This, like Darwin's account of music in the process of sexual selection, shows music in action. It also notes an additional property of music, shared by language, in its reference to mimesis: « in the manner of a bleating calf » This is clearly characterised as song - that is as music, rather than as mere animal imitation. But it is music that acts as a sort of charm. As Michael Taussig explains in *Mimesis and Alterity* (1993): «to give an example, to instantiate, to be concrete, are all examples of the magic of mimesis wherein the replication, the copy, acquires the power of the represented» (Taussing 1993: 13) The young man, through his imitation, sings something into being: something that slips between the human and the animal. Taussig is clear that:

> the spirits of plants and animals and so forth exist in human form! This slippage is essential, and I presume its specification for any particular plant, animal, object or person is its 'secret' (*Ivi*: 87).

Thus the action of the song of the young man *creates and potentialises* a being that slips between two worlds, in an act as definite as Austin's laying of a bet or contracting of a marriage. It makes something so, in a situation where the conventions in play include, but are more than, human ones. This might also speak to contemporary concerns to counter a normative, anthropocentric position with a more inclusive sense of a world that arises from the mutual, situated affordances of things and selves both human and non-human.

What is the distribution of intention in this scenario? Intention is of interest here because it arises from our understanding of what there is to do; what acts are conceivable. (cf. Bernstein 1996) In Paul Grice's account of speech acts (1975), intentionality plays a key role, since it is critical that the perceiver of a speech act understands not only the force of the action but also the fact that it was intended by the person who uttered it. We can say that Austin's saying of « I do » affords marriage only if we believe that the person who utters the words really intends to do so, and that that intention, rather than just the words, is understood within the social and legal contexts in operation. This proposes a tension or force-field between the creative irruption of a speech act and the situation into which it intervenes and within which it has its effect. Peter Kivy asserts a similar tension within the social configuration of music when he states that «music is not a stimulus […]: it is an object of perception and cognition, which understanding opens up for appreciation» (Kivy 1990: 41). This proposes that conventions and creative agency are not enough to instantiate a speech or music act. His remark reminds us that, whatever the determinations of context, the *felicity* of music acts, and of speech acts, involves not only the intention of the person who makes the utterance, but also the intention of the person who hears it. Thus, in Jankélévitch's account of the pianist performing, it is the *listening* that is the critical element:

> One doesn't 'listen to' a pianist playing before his public […] in the same way that one 'listens to' a lecturer speaking to his audience[5] (Jankélévitch 1961: 32, Jankélévitch's emphasis, author's translation)

[5] On n'« écoute » pas un pianiste qui joue devant son public ou un chanteur qui chante devant ce même public comme on « écoute » un conférencier qui parle à ses auditeurs.

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3.2 Inter-subjective Co-creation

I want to suggest here, as I implied at the end of Part 2 above, when I said «music - whatever that is», that music is not simply a perceptual flow or a structured set of sounding objects, 'out there' and available for perception and interpretation. It is rather a sonorous network of disparate components, unfolding in time, that afford listening i.e. an intentional act of co-creation. One could even say that music is open to what sound has to give it. This would figure music as the consequence of listening, in the presence of bodies, animate and inanimate, brought into being by a music act on the part of the listener, as well as on the part of the maker; that is: guided by two sets of intentions. This joint enterprise is set out by the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher, John Reid (1788):

> I call those operations social, which necessarily imply social intercourse with some other intelligent being who bears a part in them. A man may see, and hear, and remember, and judge, and reason; he may deliberate and form purposes, and execute them, without the intervention of any other intelligent being. They are solitary acts. But when he asks a question for information, when he testifies a fact, when he gives a command to his servant, when he makes a promise, or enters into a contract, these are social acts of mind, and can have no existence without the intervention of some other intelligent being, who acts a part in them. Between the operations of the mind, which, for want of a more proper name, I have called solitary, and those I have called social, there is this very remarkable distinction that, in the solitary, the expression of them by words, or any other sensible sign, is accidental. They may exist, and be complete, without being expressed, without being known to any other person. But, in the social operations, the expression is essential. They cannot exist without being expressed by words or signs, and known to the other party (Reid 1788: 330).

In this reading, taking music to be an «expressed [...] sign», music appears as a 'social operation' that is cocreated, and co-intended by bodies in sympathy, making it an act of intersubjectivity that «enacts» its subjects. This would mean that there could be what I would call 'reduced' or partial musics. When John Cage says, in a late interview, that «finally I'd rather just listen to traffic» (Miller, Smacny 2012) he is proposing a music act where the only intentionality is that of the listener; i.e. there is a sense in which listening *makes* music as a music act in its own right.

In conclusion, I have tried to show how it is possible to think about music as acting, in the same way as Austin thinks about language as acting, and I have made a few basic suggestions concerning a range of possible music acts. These reveal some clear differences between music acts and speech acts, proposing that the relationship between the two is not simply metaphorical. A speech act requires certain sorts of laws or social conventions to produce its effect. To make a bet, to marry, to prohibit, are all substantive arrangements of social power. Music also acts within social conventions that are set in place by similar social and political forces, but I have suggested ways in which music might be seen to engage contexts and conventions that are themselves instantiated musically. These conventions may concern the formation of subjects, even in liminal spaces. As Claude Levi-Strauss (1964) and Phillipe Descola (2013) point out that the notions of 'culture' and 'nature' co-evolve with one another, perhaps music might also act within the conventions of this 'nature' alongside which 'culture' evolves.

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